

5314 Colonial Drive
Columbia, South Carolina 29203
April 30, 2010

Public Service Commission
101 Executive Center Drive, Suite 100
Columbia, South Carolina 29210

COMMENT: SCE&G PROPOSED RATE HIKE, DOCKET 2009-489-E

I can't believe the utility behemoth, SCE&G, is asking for another increase while it is not in the slightest chastened or embarrassed to have built this colossal, \$142-million monument to itself and to pay its CEO the effect of more than \$5 million in one year.

If this outrage is not contained, the S.C. leadership should kick off every member of the so-called regulatory agency who has almost always granted what SCE&G asked for.

SCE&G has been a bad citizen in every way:

- SCE&G punishes the public with rate increases for the things it needs to do to protect the public.
- Its contract tree-cutting trees gives no thought to botched-up appearances while refusing to consider bull-dozing/cutting/spraying to kill small trees growing in public alleyways until they are fully-grown and it costs more to cut them,
- It charges ridiculous amounts to put ugly power-lines underground while outages bring discomfort with no thought of the inconvenience and lost business of their customers.
- It has taken public credit for helping the poor with their power bills when, in fact, churches and other agencies have had to pick up most of the tab at which point SCE&G charges those charities the fines for late payment imposed on the impoverished; they refuse to remove the penalties even when a charity is paying!
- It has pretended to offer energy audits when their audits were less than useless (Of course, they don't want us to save energy!) until federal regulations said they had to make some attempt.
- It fails to keep up its property and make it as attractive as possible in the less-than-fancy neighborhoods unless the neighborhood raises a huge stink. It doesn't care.
- Charging South Carolinians among the highest rates in the United States makes this request all the more ridiculous.
- And a 10 percent rate hike? Now? Ever? SCE&G should learn to manage its business.
- Let it take the money out of what they give away in advertising to make a "good name" for itself among the affluent who attend high-priced cultural and sporting events. Its leaders have forgotten the company is a *public* utility.

I would urge two things: If this goes through, we should write AND call our congressmen to ask the federal government to break up this monopoly.

We should all think seriously about solar; if we can't break the back of this selfishness one way, we can do it another way. I see the Southern Company has lobbied against solar in another southeastern state; let's make sure SCE&G doesn't buy our legislators on that issue.

The utility's spokesperson, Mr. Boomhower, said, "it's not like we have that money in a footlocker." Actually, they do. They just need to run the utility efficiently as if it is a public trust instead of a private playground funded by the public.



Emily L. Cooper